

**City of Falls Church  
Economic Development Authority  
Meeting Minutes for  
Tuesday, March 7, 2006 – 6:30 p.m.  
Training Room  
Level G, City Hall**

**Call to Order:**

EDA Chairman Ed Saltzberg called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

**Present:**

EDA Board members: Ed Saltzberg, Bob Butchko, Bruce Swenson, Barry Buschow, Dan Sze, Warren Cohen

**Absent:** A.C. Miller

**ED staff:** Rick Goff, Becky Witsman

**Others attending:** Dick McCall

**I. Petitions from the Public –**

Dick McCall, representing the Falls Church Education Foundation, attended the meeting and gave the Board an overview of the Foundation's mission, goals and accomplishments. The Foundation will soon be holding their second annual fundraising dinner; their goal is to raise \$10 million over the next 5 years. Funds are used to pay for education expenditures that cannot be accommodated in the annual school budget, such as for robotics competition, teacher leadership training, entrance fees for students who cannot afford them, and other uses identified by teachers. Mr. McCall's purpose in attending the EDA meeting was to request grant monies from the EDA budget in the amount of \$5,000. Bruce Swenson expressed concern that, while the expenditure is certainly for a good cause, it is not directly related to economic development purposes, so he opposed the request. He felt strongly that the money should be used for special economic development studies, projects and Economic Development Office costs. Rick Goff was asked for the amount of the current reserve, which is \$115,000. Warren Cohen added that while he would have voted last month in favor of the First Friday request for funding because he feels that it is good for business and although the Foundation is a worthy cause, he also shared Bruce's concern. Dan Sze requested that, if possible, Mr. McCall and the Foundation staff consider submitting a more specific grant request proposal to the EDA Board, which does include more of an economic development connection. Ed Saltzberg and other committee members shared this preference for a more specific funding request, to be brought back to the EDA Board next month. Mr. McCall thanked the Board and agreed that the Foundation would come back with the requested information.

**II. Petitions from the Board** – Barry Buschow requested additional information and input on recent zoning issues, such as parking, because he is concerned that parking requirements drive use. Hence, if someone wants to put up a restaurant and dry cleaners, that individual/entity may not be able to get what they want because of parking requirements. Bob Butchko also pointed out the commercial vs. residential parking situation at the Broadway. Discussion on this issue ensued but ultimately there was

consensus that we should know whether or not the shared parking decisions and calculations have worked as anticipated and whether or not there might be a need to make some adjustments based on experience. Mr. Butchko agreed to become more involved in this issue, to identify the potential for policy decisions that might adversely affect economic development efforts.

**III. Approval of February Minutes** - approved with one abstention by Warren Cohen, who was unable to attend last month's meeting.

**IV. Old Business – None**

**V. New Business** – Rick Goff briefed EDA members on the upcoming “branding session”, beginning with asking EDA Board members to consult their calendars to determine whether or not the tentative date of Wednesday, March 29<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 – 9:30 p.m. for the event is satisfactory. He explained that the session is designed to initiate dialogue and solicit ideas, with Heather Arnold collecting that input and translating it into a logo idea that she will create in partnership with the City's graphics designer, Frank Sottile. The logo will be included in a retail attraction and recruitment strategy.

- a. Retail study “branding” session date decided: Wednesday, March 29, 7:00-9:30 p.m., community center/teen center
- b. Invitees – A discussion of who should be invited to the event elicited a well-rounded list of those who can assist in providing Heather Arnold with input on a new retail theme for the City. EDA Board members also requested that she begin her introduction of the evening with an explanation of how we arrived at this juncture.

**VI. Staff Reports** – Rick Goff primarily updated EDA Board members on issues that have occurred since the last staff reports were sent out. He reported that there have been productive meetings regarding the City Center project. Due to land assembly challenges on the north side of City Center, it's probable that the South side of Broad Street will redevelop first. Land assemblage difficulties have been one of reasons Centex was not able to attend the meeting this evening, as well as their current efforts in reorganizing their development team. When they have assembled a critical mass of properties and developed conceptual plans for community review, the City staff will encourage them to get out as soon as possible to begin working with Boards and Commissions, starting with the EDA. Rick also updated members on the status of the City Transportation study. The lead staffer in the planning office is close to signing an agreement for consultant services. Rick has also gained a commitment for a change to the study scope, to include an evaluation of the City's shared parking formula, in terms of how it has worked so far and also including recommended changes and implications for City Center. EDO staff is also working to identify an appraiser for six city parcels, as a first step to negotiating with developers for the prospective purchase of those properties. Staff has received one response to the appraisal RFP so far but the proposed cost of the response was too high, so staff will soon meet with two more appraisers to seek a more reasonably priced appraisal. As a result of the meeting of the City Manager, Chamber of Commerce representatives and EDO staff, a letter was sent out last week to businesses located in the City Center area, to get word out to the businesses about the City Center project such as the status of the project, that there should still be plenty of time for businesses to plan their future and that there is not even a guarantee that development will occur. It also relates that the Chamber will be conducting a survey of their concerns and needs, so that programs to assist them can be considered. There is a lot of progress in the City as regards development activity. A Special Exception application for development of the former Pearson Funeral Home site will probably be going to work session in the next 30-45 days. Staff is awaiting a formal resubmission. The Read Building that will be constructed at the site of the

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former Falls Church Service Center was approved by the City Council and will soon be under construction. Plans for the Stratford Motel site are up in the air as the prospective developers are deciding whether or not to file a revised application. Atlantic Realty continues to make progress on redevelopment plans on the south side of Broad Street. Rick also announced that EDO staffer Stephanie Johnson would soon be transferring to another City position and that her position will be upgraded; the job announcement has been posted on the City web site. Becky Witsman advised Board members that a State towing bill was recently approved and is awaiting the Governor's signature. She also mentioned that what may be the City's first "executive suites" office space is located at 252 N. Washington and that should Board members know of businesses looking for space that is well-decorated, furnished, includes a kitchenette, receptionist, conference room, copier and other amenities, to please mention the availability of the space, that could be used temporarily (6 mos. +) or longer.

**VII. EDA Roundtable Update on Projects and Sites** – Ed Saltzberg briefed Board members that he has started work on an annual EDA report to City Council and he handed out copies of his progress to date. The briefing will include topics such as where City economic development efforts have been and where they are going. He solicited comments and suggestions from EDA Board members.

**VIII. Other Business - Enhanced EDA Board member commitments** – Ed Saltzberg suggested that he believes it is time to talk about refocusing the involvement and activities of EDA Board members. Accordingly, he created a list of assignment possibilities, asking Board members to consider committing to assignments based on their interests. This enhanced commitment would perhaps involve an additional 6-8 hours a month, plus the Board meeting, at which Board members would report back to the full Board. Some of the assignments mentioned were:

1. Creation of an EDA policy for consideration of grant requests
2. Advocacy for development projects
3. Execution of the marketing/branding program
4. An EDA ombudsman
5. City policy analysis
6. Coordination with other boards and commissions
7. Coordination with the City Manager, neighboring EDA's, City Council
8. City Center issues
9. EDA funding
10. Economic development tools (toolkit) such as tax increment financing
11. Public outreach/writing articles that get published
12. Developer/project liaison

**IX. Adjournment** – at 8:30 p.m.